

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3 and 11 have been amended. Claims 8-10 have been canceled without prejudice, thereby rendering moot the rejection of these claims. Claims 1-7 and 11 are currently pending.

Claims 1-7

Claims 1-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by USP 4,014,457 to Hodge ("Hodge"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 3 has been rewritten into independent form to include the limitations of original claim 1. Claim 3 recites, among other limitations, a longitudinal opening defined along the sleeve 32a, with the non-metal tube 202 having a longitudinal protruding edge 204 which is fitted in the longitudinal opening. See FIG. 14. In contrast, Hodge does not even remotely disclose a longitudinal opening defined along the sleeve 21a, and the non-metal tube 37 does not have a longitudinal protruding edge which is fitted in the longitudinal opening. Thus, claim 3 is submitted to be allowable over Hodge.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite, among other limitations, that the connector is positioned inside the interior space defined by the lid and the outer shell. See FIG. 10. In contrast, the components (e.g., 19A, 21A, 22A) of the connector in Hodge are all positioned outside the outer shell, as best shown in FIGS. 6-9 in Hodge. Thus, claim 1 is submitted to be allowable over Hodge.

Claims 2 and 4-7 depend from one of claims 1 and 3, and are submitted to be allowable for the same reasons.

Claim 11

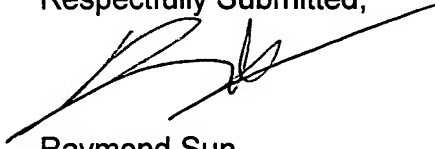
Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by USP 6,386,386 to George ("George"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 11 recites, among other limitations, a plurality of rigid inner liners positioned side-by-side and snugly inside the interior space. See page 10, lines 22-26 of the specification and FIGS. 16 and 17. In contrast, the elements 34 and 36 in George are soft (non-rigid) disposable bags that are suspended inside the outer shell 14. In addition, these bags 34, 36 are not positioned side-by-side and snugly inside the interior space of the outer shell. The soft nature of these bags 34, 36 make it impossible for them to be positioned snugly inside the interior space. Thus, claim 11 is submitted to be allowable over George.

* * *

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner still considers the above amendments to be insufficient to distinguish the cited references, **the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned to suggest any possible amendments that might place the application in condition for allowance.**

Respectfully Submitted,



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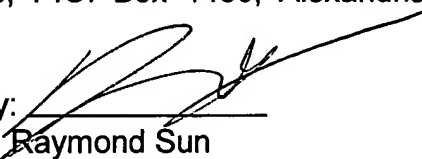
Dated: March 2, 2005

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Date: March 2, 2005

By:


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